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*An essential investigation . . .**. . . And a P. S. to Pravda*

President Ford has appointed an impressive commission to investigate charges that the Central Intelligence Agency has illegally spied on thousands of United States citizens in the United States. Vice President Rockefeller will head the group, which includes former Gov. Reagan of California, a retired general, a former secretary of the treasury, a retired university president, a corporation chairman, a national AFL-CIO officer, and a former solivator general.

A commission of this stature and range may well be called "blue ribbon." It has three months in which to deliver its report to the President. Ron Nessen, the President's press secretary, says the report will be shared with Congress and ultimately will be made public.

Sen. William Proxmire [D., Wis.] and some others are critical of the President's commission, as containing people too close to the CIA to give "the vigorous, adversary, critical analysis . . . we are supposed to get." This criticism is almost certainly unjustified, but everyone can welcome the fact that independent congressional investigations may be expected, also. What one investigation misses another one may get.

All this constitutes a serious and responsible response to allegations that

CIA activity has gone out of bounds. Necessarily a covert operation, the CIA has been subject to loose supervision. The possibility that this secretive executive agency might be turned against an administration's domestic critics and opponents is chilling. The experience of all totalitarian regimes, both Communist and fascist, has been that secret operatives have victimized citizens of their own countries. Freedom must mean freedom to oppose incumbent officials, and it should mean freedom to oppose them in legitimate ways without any degree of official harassment. President Ford's prompt appointment of a high-caliber investigating commission shows that he recognizes the seriousness of the charges made about the CIA, and seeks to uncover rather than to cover up any past excesses. That is the best possible guarantee against any future excesses. It is the best way to restore the public confidence which the CIA must have if it is to justify the proper use of secrecy.

We hope and expect Vice President Rockefeller and his associates will do a thoro job and will offer a candid report. Their best possible service to the country, the Ford administration, and the CIA itself, will be to conduct a rigorous investigation and to make an uninhibited report of their findings.

Pravda, the Communist Party paper in Moscow, has done some gleeful tongue-clucking over the reports of domestic spying by our Central Intelligence Agency.

For years, Pravda has sat by silently while the rest of the world criticized the spying that goes on against Soviet citizens and foreigners in the Soviet Union. Now, says Pravda, "the praised bourgeois democracy in practice turns out to be a system of totalitarian shadowing and espionage."

Score one for Pravda. We couldn't have phrased it better ourselves. The CIA's domestic spying, if it proves to have gone on, is precisely the sort of abuse of power that discredits our government and our country. This is why an investigation—indeed several of them—has been launched. Watergate has demonstrated that the American people won't tolerate this sort of abuse and will insist that it be exposed and corrected, even if it means the resignation of a President.

So now the ball is back in Pravda's court. When may we expect it to print big headlines about totalitarian shadowing and espionage in the Soviet Union? When will Party Leader Brezhnev appoint a committee to investigate it? When will any heads fall in punishment? Or are totalitarian evils to be accepted without a word in a totalitarian state?

We'll be waiting for an answer. But since it may be some time in coming and we may be otherwise occupied [if we're still around], perhaps Pravda had better notify whoever is President at the time on the Hot Line [assuming it's still warm]. That will be about as earth-shaking an announcement as anything that has come over the Hot Line yet.

Maggie
Daly



... Earth Kitt, who speaks her mind out politics wherever she goes, finds her reputation growing since she's been on the CIA list.